

Slaughter Hosts Major Meeting at Canadian Embassy to Discuss Border Issues

Local Mayors, Industry, Congressmen, Canadian Officials Discuss Future Border Transit

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today hosted a major meeting at the Canadian Embassy in Washington to discuss the future of transit across the US-Canadian border. Numerous New York Members of Congress were in attendance, along with local mayors, officials from the Embassy, and representatives of concerned industries.

"The proposed passport regulation, if accepted as-is, will cause serious economic damage to our border communities," Rep. Slaughter said. **"It is imperative that we not allow security procedures to unnecessarily impede trade and tourism with our Canadian neighbors,"** she added.

"What we need to do is come together and offer real alternatives to this passport requirement, alternatives like those presented by the NEXUS program, which I and many of my colleagues have been advocating for years," Rep. Slaughter said.

Later in the day, Rep. Slaughter met with mayors from the local cities to be most effected by new passport-based border crossing regulations being advocated by the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security. The State Department's Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative was discussed, as was a plan of action to promote alternatives to it which would maintain border security while keeping open the cross-border transit which is so vitally important to the region's economy.

BACKGROUND

Rep. Slaughter was the first Member of Congress to object to the Travel Initiative because of the negative economic consequences it would have for citizens in northern border communities on both sides of the US-Canadian border. The Initiative's passport requirement would result in long travel delays, reducing cross-border traffic and hurting local businesses and tourism in the process.

Rep. Slaughter and the members of the Northern Border Caucus have consistently supported an extension of the NEXUS program as opposed to the plan put forth by DHS and State. NEXUS presents a cheaper, more efficient approach to border security which would not adversely impact the economic vitality of the northern border region.

A list of those in attendance at the Canadian Embassy can be found below.

Members of the Canadian Embassy

Jon Allen, Minister (Political), Embassy of Canada

Steve Brereton, Canadian Consul-General, Buffalo

Congress (and staff)

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

Senator Charles E. Schumer

Congresswoman Louise McIntosh Slaughter

Congressman Thomas M. Reynolds

Congressman Brian Higgins

Congressman John E. Sweeney

Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey

Congressman John R. Kuhl

Congressman John M. McHugh

Congressman Michael R. McNulty

Congressman James T. Walsh

Congressman Peter King

Mayors and Mayoral staff

Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs, Niagara on the Lake

His Worship Ted Salci, Niagara Falls, ON

His Worship Wayne Redekop, Fort Erie

Mayor Anthony Masiello, Buffalo

Mayor Vince Anello, Niagara Falls, NY

Tim Wanamaker, Director of Planning, Buffalo

Jim Thibert, Director, Fort Erie Economic Development

Patrick Gould, Capitol Partners, Lobbyist for the City of Buffalo

Concerned Members of Industry

Margaret Irwin, American Trucking Associations

John Courtin, Darwin Martin House Restoration Project

Paul Dyster, Niagara Greenway Commission

Tom Garlock, General Manager, Niagara Falls Bridge Commission and President, Bridge and Tunnel Operators Association

Ron Rienas, General Manager, Peace Bridge Authority

Jim Mazzearella, Washington DC rep for NYS Gov. Pataki

Tom Donahoe, General Manager, Buffalo Bills

Don Cormier, Toronto-Rochester Fast Ferry

Ambassador Anthony Gioia, former Amb. to Malta

Andrew Rudnick, President/CEO, Buffalo Niagara Partnership

Paul Koessler and John Lopinski, Chair and Co-Chair of the Peace Bridge Authority

